

## House Republican Press Release

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### New Tone in Hartford



*By State Rep. Toni Boucher, R-143<sup>rd</sup>, Wilton,  
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Gov. M. Jodi Rell opened the 2005 session of the legislature, with a new tone, a bold agenda and an outpouring of bipartisan support as she returned to the Capitol just 10 days after breast cancer surgery. New leaders took over the state House and Senate, as well.

As snow was starting to fall, the mood was warm as she gave one of her most impressive speeches, delivered in a calm, common sense style -- outlining problems but also opportunities to move the state forward. She urged those assembled to avoid partisan posturing and political sniping in the months ahead.

Though recovering from a mastectomy for early-stage breast cancer, the governor stood before a joint session of the state House and Senate to deliver her televised State of the State address. "We have been called to leadership at a special time in history," she said, "and we cannot, we must not, turn away from our responsibilities."

On ethics, Gov. Rell recalled the past year, in which former Gov. John G. Rowland resigned following revelations that he received thousands of dollars in gifts and approved state contracts to friends. Six months after succeeding Rowland, Gov. Rell again called on the legislature to make restoring public confidence priority number one.

The governor urged quick action to tighten the state's already tough ethics laws, within the first month of the session.

On state spending, she called for budget reforms to close a recurring \$1 billion budget gap and stay within a state constitutional spending cap that was approved by more than 80 percent of voters in a 1992 statewide referendum, immediately after the income tax was imposed.

On February 9, Gov. Rell will present her two-year state budget proposal at a joint session of the legislature. After that time, the state's ongoing budget problems will consume much of the legislature's attention through the remainder of the session, which ends June 8. Unfortunately, even as revenues continue their recovery from the 2001

recession, state spending on medical care for the poor and other programs grows even faster.

On jobs and the economy, many colleagues and I are pushing the legislature not to enact laws that dampen economic expansion and discourage job creation and instead pass bills that promote economic growth. Connecticut and New England as a whole have lagged the rest of the nation in job creation, which should concern every legislator. We have asked that all new legislation contain a Jobs Impact Statement, to assure that the legislature promotes, not discourages, job growth.

On other pending issues, Gov. Rell called for action on unresolved issues including soaring medical malpractice insurance, stem cell research, education funding, election reform, traffic congestion, health care affordability and many more.

Transportation issues also will receive attention of all legislators from throughout the state, as Fairfield County representatives intensify the call to action regarding the economic gridlock now gripping southwestern Connecticut and potentially the entire state. I have made transit issues my priority for this session.

Over the past several years, we have voted more funds to add more rail cars to the Metro-North commuter fleet. Now, the time has come to begin replacing the existing 30-year-old fleet that is prone to breakdown and delay, especially during inclement weather.

Though the problems are great, so is the dedication to do something to correct them. At the opening of the session, optimism is running high. I join her in trying to make Connecticut stronger. Momentum can easily be lost, however, and we must keep up the pressure to obtain results for our region.

With a large amount level of public approval and initial support from the legislature, Gov. Rell has set the ton; and the chances of success seem better than in the past. I hope voters also will continue to voice their opinions on these and other important state issues. Please do not hesitate to contact me, if I can be of assistance on any state-related concern. My office number is 1-800-842-1423.

*Rep. Boucher serves the 143<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District of Wilton and Norwalk in the state House of Representatives.*